



NORTHERN

2026 Twin Cities League Tennis Captain and Player Guide

Welcome Captains!

USTA Northern and the Section Leagues Committee (SLC) are pleased to offer USTA Leagues again this year! USTA Northern and the SLC would like to thank you for your efforts and dedication in assembling a team to compete in Twin Cities USTA League Tennis.

Please read through the following materials, the USTA League Regulations, and Tips to a great season to help with your organizational efforts. We encourage you to share this information with your teammates to ensure a better experience for everyone. All regulations can be found on our USTA Northern Section website at www.usta.com/NorthernLeagues.

Thank you!

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Starting Your Team

1. **Find a home court facility for your team!** You must get an “okay to play” from a facility. You will need to contact the tennis director or coordinator at your location of choice and tell them which day or evening your league plays. They will then let you know if they can accommodate your team. Secure your courts early and get an email confirmation from the tennis director along with the facility’s USTA league team policies. Any facility that has enough courts to accommodate your team can be an option, from a public park to a private indoor club. If you have problems securing a home court, contact your Area League Coordinator for suggestions. .

When creating a team, it is now required that you enter an accurate home court facility in TennisLink. You must have your home court approved prior to creating your team. You will not be able to register your team without this information. If your facility is not listed yet, click on *Other Facility* and enter the zip code **only** and choices will appear. If there are multiple listings for your facility, select the top choice. If your facility does not appear, select *Independent Team* (this is the first listing in the drop down box), then email Paige Olowu at paige@northern.usta.com with your home court location so Tennislink can be updated.

2. **The captain’s last name(s) must be included and listed first in your team name.** This is how your team appears on the schedule and other captains, facilities, and the USTA Section staff need to know who to contact to confirm match dates, times, etc.
3. **Create your team in TennisLink.** Go to tennislink.usta.com/leagues and log in to your USTA account. You will land on the *USTA League* home page. Look for *My Quick Links* on the right side of the page, click on *Online Team Creation*, and follow the prompts. Write down the team number which begins with 555. Tell your teammates to register for your team in TennisLink (*Register for a Team*) by using the assigned team number.
4. **Team Captain Report.** Please confirm your correct email address and cell phone number are listed in TennisLink. To update your personal information, log in to your USTA account, click on *Manage Account* on the upper right side of the page, and follow the prompts.
5. **Matchline** is a great resource! If you are in need of players for your team or are looking to join a team, contact Carol Thies at matchline@northern.usta.com or 952-358-3285.

2026 Twin Cities Leagues

- Three main seasons of play: **Early Start, Winter, and Summer.** League types offered: Adult 18 & Over, Adult 18 & Over Women's Daytime (Summer Only) Adult 40 & Over, Adult 55 & Over, Adult 55 & Over Women's Daytime, Adult 65 & Over (Summer Only), Mixed Doubles 18 & Over, and Mixed Doubles 40 & Over (summer only)
- Two short seasons of play: **Spring and Fall.** League offered: ONE Doubles and Mixed 55 & Over (Fall Only)
- Matches are played weekly, year round.
- Days of Play and League Dates and Deadlines can be found on our [**USTA Northern Twin Cities website**](#).
- **League Registration Fees:** \$31/player for Adult 18 & Over and Adult 40 & Over; \$27/player for Adult 55 & Over, Adult 65 & Over, Mixed Doubles 18 & Over, and Mixed Doubles 40 & Over; and \$22/player for ONE Doubles and Mixed Doubles 55 & Over.

Registration Policy

- Teams must be created in TennisLink by the published registration deadline. This is your commitment to play. League registration fees are **non-refundable**. We need to know you are committed to the play season in order to schedule matches.
- **Minimum at-level requirements** per the Twin Cities Area Regulations for Adult 18 & Over and Adult 40 & Over leagues must be met by the first day of the play season.
2.01A(1) Minimum Players at Level: *Adult 18 & Over and Adult 40 & Over teams must have a minimum of eight "at-level" players rostered by the start date of the play season with the exception of 2.5 and 5.0 teams which require a minimum of three "at level" players. Teams not meeting this minimum will not be eligible to play.*

Rescheduling Policy

- This is a captain responsibility not the League Coordinator's.
- Both team captains must agree in order to reschedule a match.
- Only reschedule a match if absolutely necessary. Court availability is an issue, especially in the indoor season.
- The team available to play the match as scheduled should provide three dates to reschedule.
- Matches should be completed within two (2) weeks. If this is not possible, they must be completed by the end date of the league season as published in the USTA League Regulations.
- Email the Match ID along with the new date/time/location to Paige Olowu at paige@northern.usta.com so TennisLink can be updated.
- Please note: most facilities have a 24 - 36 hour cancellation policy and the defaulting team may be responsible for court fees if cancelling at the last minute.
- Please remember the objective is to play the match!

How Do USTA Leagues Work? What Does a Captain Do?

USTA League Tennis matches are played at various tennis clubs and facilities within the seven-county metro area. Please note that facilities may have specific policies which must be followed regarding check-in, payment of court fees, expiration of court time, etc. Check your schedule and get to know the policies of the facilities you play in. All court fees must be paid to the facility prior to the start of the first match of the given day/evening.

It is a captain's responsibility to know USTA League Rules and Regulations. Please review them and encourage your players to do so as well. Complete Area, Section, and National regulations, including Q & A, can be found on our [USTA Northern Section website](#).

Your first match...

Get Ready!

1. Organize your team. Make sure your team knows the schedule and line-up, where and when the match is being played, **what time they need to be there**, the court fees, and the payment policy.
2. **Require your players to arrive 30 minutes before the scheduled match time.** Most facilities are fully booked so it is extremely important to be ready to go on court at your scheduled time.
3. **Always confirm your match with your opponent and the tennis facility** including: match times, court fees, payment policy, court assignments, indoor versus outdoor, and open courts prior to or after your match. This is the only way to guarantee there will be no mix-ups! See Facility Contacts sheet for contact information.
4. Know each facility's USTA League policies. For example, St. Paul Indoor does not accept credit cards, Baseline Tennis Center, InnerCity Tennis, and Wooddale Tennis and Health require the captain to collect and pay court fees for the entire team prior to the start of the first match, and Life Time Fitness has check-in and payment policies for members versus non-members.
5. Let your opposing team captain know if you are not going to be at the match and inform them who will be taking over your duties.
6. Print a blank scorecard from TennisLink and make sure all players are listed on your roster. Use this scorecard to exchange line-ups with the opposing captain.

Get Set!

1. Present a copy of your line-up or a list of players for the match to the facility desk person for all matches.
2. Simultaneously exchange line-ups before the match.
3. **Twin Cities Area Default Period 2.01C(2).** *In local league competition, players failing to arrive on court, ready to play at the scheduled start time of their individual match are in default. All players are required to be on court or ready to enter the court at the scheduled start time of their individual match, or a default may be called.*
4. The home team provides a new can of balls to be used at each position and is in charge of entering scores in TennisLink upon completion of the match.

Go!

1. The home team captain should introduce his/her team to the opposing team.
2. Be ready to play on time and limit the warm-up to 5 Minutes (No Short Court Warmup). **This is very important!** *Captains, please be aware of warm-up time and let your players know when the 5 minute warm-up is over and it's time to begin the match.*
3. **Continuous Play.** Per ITF Rule 29, play should be continuous from the time the match starts (when the first serve is put into play) until the match finishes. *Captains, please remind your players not to dawdle on change of ends and set breaks.*
4. **The Coman Tiebreak procedure.** The Coman Tiebreak procedure is used for all tiebreaks played during a match.
 - a. Set Tie Break: First to win 7 points by 2 points wins "Game" and "Set"
 - b. 3rd set Match Tie Break: First to win 10 points by 2, wins match.
 - i. The player whose turn it is to serve shall serve the first point from the deuce court.
 - ii. After the first point, the players shall change ends and the following two points shall be served by the opponent(s) (in doubles, the player of the opposing team due to serve next) starting from the ad court.
 - iii. After this, each player/team shall serve alternately for two consecutive points (starting from the ad court); changing ends after every four points, until the completion of the tie break game.
 - iv. Switch ends after points 1,5,9,13, 17..... and at the conclusion.
 - c. SUMMARY
 - i. Switch sides after 1st point to the deuce court
 - ii. Then switch sides every 4 points thereafter
 - iii. Each player serves on the side they serve from during the set
5. Be respectful to your team and opposing teams – reinforce good sportsmanship.

6. In the case of **unfinished matches**, scores stand as played with play continuing from that point at another date/time/location as agreed upon by both teams' captains and players. Matches should be completed within two (2) weeks. If this is not possible, they must be completed by the end date of the league season as published in the USTA League Regulations. The home team should provide three dates to complete the match. If one team is unwilling or unable to complete the match, the actual scores when play stopped are recorded as a win by retirement for player(s) willing and able to finish.
7. **Score reporting for unfinished matches.** Record the scores of the individual matches that were completed. Record the scores of the incomplete individual matches as a double default. Report scores upon completion to Paige Olowu at paige@northern.usta.com so Tennislink can be updated.
8. **Match results must be entered in TennisLink within 48 hours** after the match has been played or matches may be called into double default (Local league regulation 1.04C(2).) If for any reason the match is rescheduled, the captains must notify Paige Olowu at paige@northern.usta.com.

Resources

- **USTA League Regulations**
 - Complete Area, Section, and National regulations are now combined in one document and can be found on our [USTA Northern Section website](#).
- **Matchline – Carol Thies**
 - If you need players for your team or are looking to join a team, please contact thies@northern.usta.com or 952-358-3285.
- **Coordinator, Competition – Paige Olowu**
 - paige@northern.usta.com or 952-358-3287
- **Director, Competition – Aaron Holland**
 - aaron@northern.usta.com or 952-358-3293.

Thank you for captaining and playing. Have a great time and ENJOY playing socially competitive tennis!